



The VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER BIRMINGHAM
<http://www.lwvgb.org>

November 2018

CONGRATS TENNESSEE VALLEY!

Congratulations to the new [League of Women Voters of the Tennessee Valley](#), which has recently moved from member-at-large status to a fully functioning LWV. We look forward to learning more about their plans and perhaps attending a League meeting. Inform your friends and family in the Madison County area and urge them to join.



LWVGB MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, November 8th

Vestavia Public Library

6:00 P.M.

ELECTION 2018:

Voter Turnout and Election Integrity

Speaker: Judge Alan L. King

MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE OVERDUE!

Please [make your membership dues payment today](#).

CALENDAR OF EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS

Mark your calendar. See this issue or [LWVGB Online Calendar](#) for event details.

- Nov 03:** Absentee Ballot Application Deadline
- Nov 05:** Deadline to cast Absentee Ballot
- Nov 06:** ELECTION DAY
- Nov 08:** Mbrship Mtg @ Vestavia Public Library
- Nov 27:** Annual Giving Tuesday
- Dec 01:** LWVGB Holiday Luncheon
- Jan 21:** MLK Day of Service
- Feb 14:** LWV Birthday
- March 2019:** Women's History Month
- Mar 10-16:** Sunshine Week
- Apr 22:** Earth Day
- May 17-19:** LWVAL Convention 2019

OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

Leonette Slay, LWVGB President

On October 4th, I attended a zoning commission meeting at Hoover City Hall. One of the three items on the agenda was a request for a variance in Bluff Park, and nearby neighborhoods had been alerted to the meeting by a copy of the agenda affixed to our mailboxes.

All those attending the meeting received a copy of the agenda. The commission, composed of five volunteer members, began the meeting promptly at 7 with a roll call. The variance request that resulted in a packed chamber dealt with a request to allow a Sober Living (for profit) group home to be placed in a single family home on Shades Crest Road. Sober Living representatives explained that the home would house 10 women, plus a fulltime staff member, after the women had completed a recovery program. Each woman would have her own vehicle, which would require parking for up to 11 vehicles. Counseling and other services would occur offsite and no visitors would be allowed. They requested the variance under the Fair Housing Act and Americans With Disabilities Act, which includes alcohol and drug addiction.

Opponents of the request cited the single-family nature of the neighborhood. Objections included the lack of space on the property for 11 vehicles and the problematic septic system on that property. (A previous owner of the property cited his problems there, with only two adults in the house). Others mentioned lack of visibility when exiting one end of the circular driveway. After over an hour of hearing from Bluff Park residents, the city planner, and variance proponents, the commission voted unanimously to deny the variance. The commission chair had previously consulted with city attorneys to ensure a denial would not contravene federal law. It should be noted that the other two requests for variance, one from a homeowner and one from a business, were also denied.

PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPHS

Leonette Slay

The last two months have been a time that has brought partners both old and new to collaborate with LWVGB. We once again partnered with Upsilon ETA Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha and the Magic City Bar to sponsor our educational forum at Gardendale Civic Center on October 8th. We began a new partnership with the CEO of area America's Thrift Stores, Ken Sobaski, who facilitated voter registration events in multiple stores (see the Voter Services article for details). Jennifer Sobaski is a new member and initiated this groundbreaking partnership. In early October, LWVGB president Barbara Caddell and I talked with Allison Skinner, a Birmingham attorney who is chairing the Alabama State Bar's multi-year task force to commemorate 100 years of women's suffrage in 2020. The bar has already done a formidable amount of research and has plans to work with our area Girl Scout council for a centennial suffrage badge; a suffrage exhibit at Vulcan in 2020; an exhibit at Helen Keller's home in Tusculumbia; a speaker's bureau; and distribution of age-appropriate educational materials to state schools. In 2020 the Alabama Bar Association will have a female president and the planning committee anticipates asking a nationally known speaker to address their annual meeting. Finally, we have submitted a client proposal to an upper class marketing/mass communications class at Samford University to research transparency in local governmental agencies, with the goal of presenting findings in mid-March 2019 (coinciding with National Sunshine Week). LWVGB supporter Stacy Smith and I will be meeting with the Samford professor on November 13th to further explain our proposal. It also includes a request to develop a marketing campaign to publicize student memberships.

We also have a timely program set for November 8th at 6:00 p.m. in the Vestavia Hills Library Community Room. Judge Alan King will review voter turnout statistics from the November 6th election and discuss voting integrity.

Remember to put Saturday, December 1st, on your calendar for our annual holiday luncheon. We will be meeting at City Club at noon. Details, to include reservation and speaker information, will be coming soon. We have invited the LWVGB president and her spouse to attend.

As you can see we are ending the year with a lot of momentum. If you are a procrastinator like me, check that you've renewed your commitment to the League through annual dues--and a bit more if you are able. Our new membership has climbed by double digits, but we need to retain our experienced League members as well.

DID YOU KNOW?

While the League eagerly anticipates celebrating 100 years of suffrage in 2020, our sisters in New Zealand have just celebrated 125 years of voting power. According to a September 24 article in *The Washington Post*, New Zealand became the first country to grant women suffrage, in 1893. On September 19th, to celebrate, 39 of New Zealand's 46 current female members of Parliament re-created a photo dating back to 1905, when the country had an all-male Parliament. Prime Minister Jacinda Arden, who had her first child in June, brought her daughter. To see both photos, taken in the Reading Room of the Parliamentary Library, go to <https://wapo.st/2DlIT97>.

Black Friday. Cyber Monday.

#GIVINGTUESDAY

November 27, 2018

Please remember LWVGB
during the holiday season!

<https://lwvgb.org/about/donate/>

D.C. Self Government (from LWVUS Impact on Issues)

Leonette Slay, LWVGB President

The League has supported District self-government since 1938. While progress for full voting representation has been slow, some gains have been made: the right of District citizens to vote for President and Vice-President, through ratification of the 23d Amendment in 1961; the right to elect a non-voting delegate to Congress, in 1970; a 1974 limited home-rule charter providing for an elected mayor and city council.

In August 1978, the Senate confirmed the house-approved constitutional amendment providing full voting rights for DC citizens. State and local Leagues took the lead in ratification efforts but when the ratification period expired in 1985, only 16 of the necessary 38 states had ratified the amendment.

Current status: Eleanor Holmes Norton, the nonvoting D.C. Delegate to Congress since 1991, introduced HR 1291 (Washington DC Admission Act, cosponsors 166 (D), 0 (R)). SEN Thomas Carper (D-DE) introduced S. 1278, cosponsors 28(D), 1(I). The bills have been referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and Committee on Rules, and Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, respectively. The League's position:

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that citizens of the District of Columbia should be afforded the same rights of self-government and full voting representation in Congress as are all other citizens of the United States.

VOTER SERVICES

Nancy Sales, LWVGB Director

Between October 1st and 19th we held 11 voter registration events. Nineteen different persons helped with these events. Ten of these had not previously helped with LWVGB voter registration, the largest of such group I have seen! Special thanks to Barbara Lewis and Connie Arnwine for recruiting friends to help. That is great! It is extra special that several of these have joined the LWVGB.

The registration totals from these are 35 new and 38 change of address. These numbers are not as large as from National Voter Registration Day in September when we registered at 3 high schools and Lovelady Center. Nor are they as large as in presidential election years. Nevertheless, we are thankful for each person never before registered and those who for years have not been able to vote and now can do so.

The largest numbers were from MAX Central Station and the Huffman/Center Point and Pell City America's Thrift Stores. We have new LWVGB member, Jennie Sobaski and her husband Ken Sobaski, President and CEO of America's Thrift Store, to thank for these new opportunities for voter registration locations.

Of course most registrations were for Jefferson County. However, there were a few each for Shelby, St. Clair, Talladega and one for Calhoun. The last three were collected at the Pell City America's Thrift Store.

Though registration for this general election is closed, November 1st, we will be present at Pleasant Grove High School's College and Career Evening. The plan is to offer yard signs, share information about the Alabama constitutional amendments on the ballot, and urge voting on November 6th, 2018.



Board of Directors, 2018-19

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Yvonne Brakefield Knowles VOTER Editor

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters."

~ *Abraham Lincoln*

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